

"THE ORIENTAL BAND," AS CLEMENCEAU SEES IT

The Ex-Premier of France Visits Uruguay and Buenos Ayres, and What He Found There He Tells to The New York Times.

Georges Clemenceau, the famous ex-Premier of the French Republic, has been studying the South American nations at first hand for the purpose of introducing those neglected countries to the world. He has written the result of his investigations for THE NEW YORK TIMES. The first chapter was published January 29. The second, published here, deals with his experiences in Uruguay and Buenos Ayres.

By Georges Clemenceau.

II.

THROUGH the vaporous atmosphere of the sky line there appear the serrated edges of Montevideo, the capital of Uruguay, which was formerly a province of the Argentine, and to-day constitutes an independent republic.

In the current language of Buenos Ayres, Uruguay is known simply as "the Oriental Band." When any one says: "He is an Oriental," he does not mean a Turk or a Levantine, but an inhabitant of the smallest republic of South America, which is bounded by the left bank of the Uruguay, Brazil, and the sea.

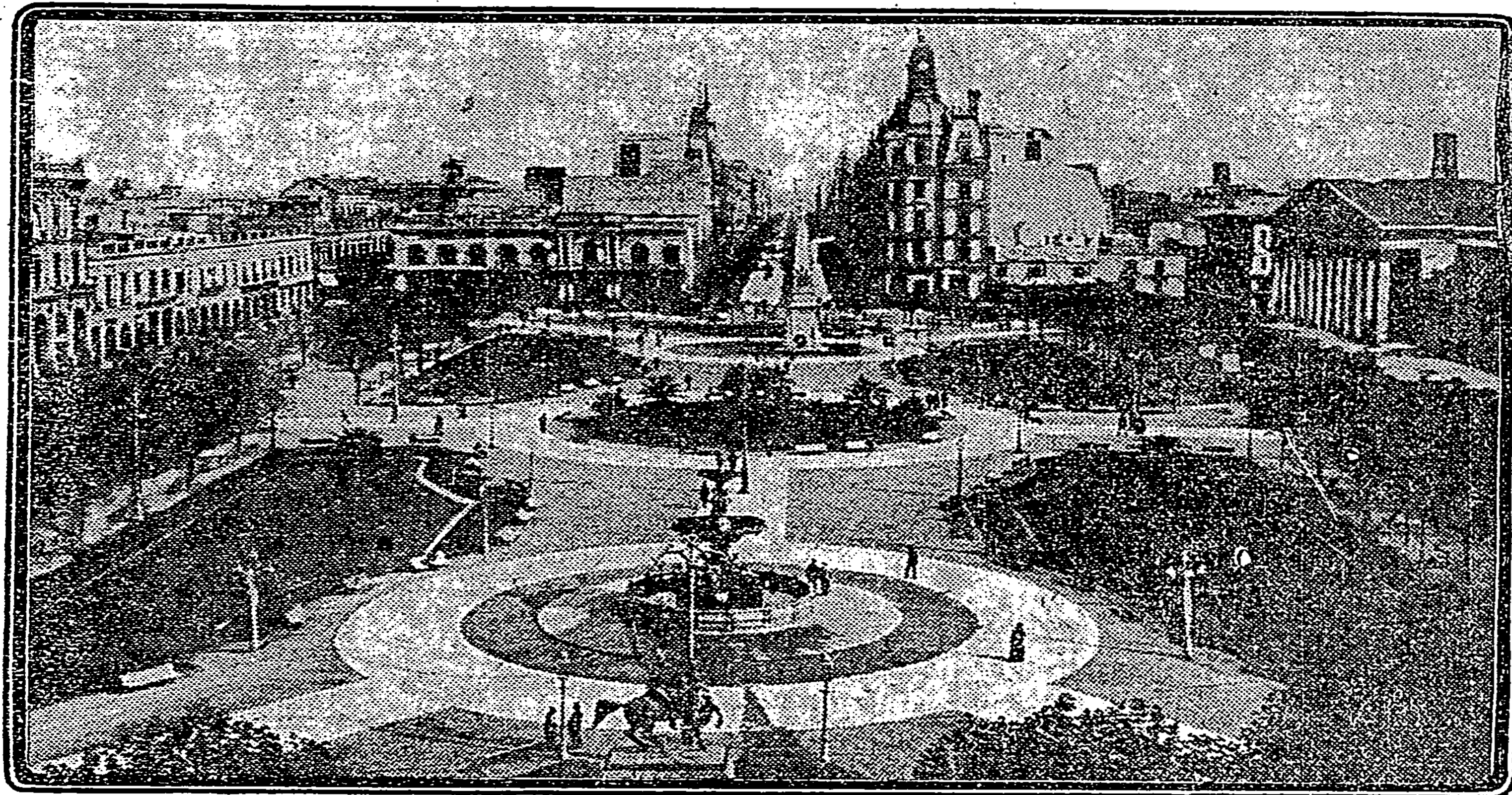
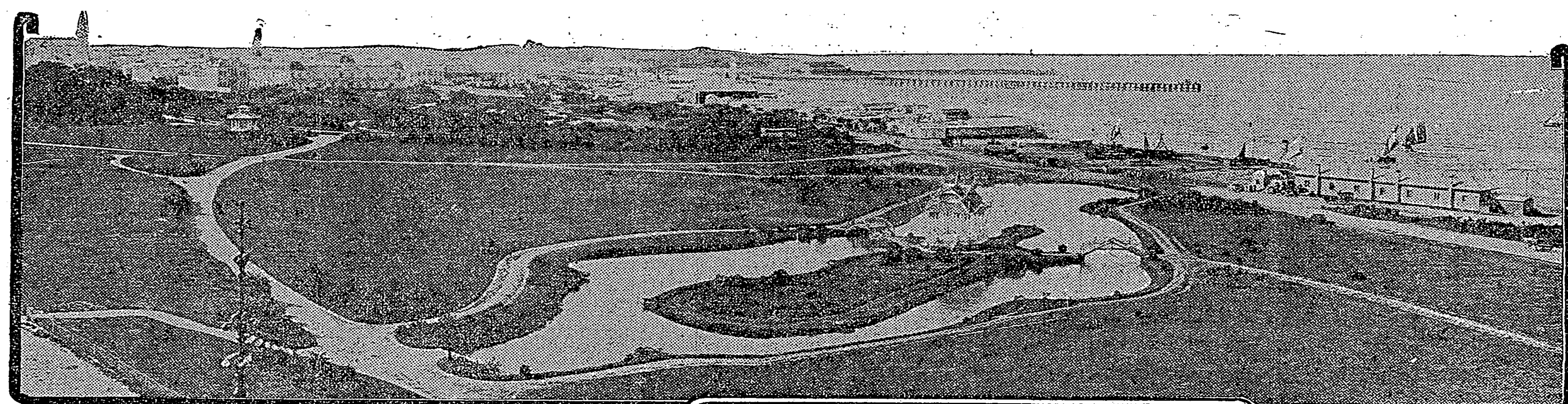
Quite apart from the question of size, the Argentine and Uruguay have too

floor is lofty; the door and windows are often covered with ornaments like the sugar icing of an Italian pastry cook, standing for art on a cheap scale to a population of sunny countries. The unexpected feature is that the first floor, with its balcony, stops short as if sudden ruin had overtaken the builder. This type is repeated indefinitely wherever I have been. The most humble citizen, the moment he abandons his primitive cabin of corrugated iron, tries to excite public admiration by adorning his balcony on the perpetually unfinished first floor. The climate allows of flat roofs and no chimneys. Sometimes a balustrade would have a finished look. The drawing room windows are naturally in the front of the house, and ladies in their indoor dress have no objection to showing themselves for the delectation of passers-by.

Let us say at once that in these warm countries misconduct is rare. One marries young, and one's energies are too much occupied by the civilization uncontaminated by touches of decadence to look deliberately for any other pleasure than that of following the straight path. I will not say that one of the attractions of Paris for the

morning at daybreak we shall be looking through our glasses at the harbor of Buenos Ayres.

The estuary of the Rio de la Plata, the Silver River—the estuary is not a river and contains not a particle of silver—got its name from the rare native jewels found there by the early pioneers, and is a veritable sea. Though this immense sheet of water is landlocked, there is no trace of its terrestrial limits on the horizon. I hear it said that it is as wide as the Lake of Geneva is long, 40 kilometers, in fact, which finally attain 180 kilometers at the mouth, after a course of 350 kilometers. The surface covered by the estuary is 35,000 square kilometers, that is to say, larger than Holland.



The Plaza de Mayo "Rather Clumsy in Appearance."

much in common not to be jealous of one another. The Argentines seem to think that their own prodigious development must be at the expense of the other province. It may easily be that the Oriental Band, in its personal pride, piques itself on its independent existence. Meanwhile, it is natural enough that there should be a little quarreling, by the way, while awaiting the solution of the future.

Uruguay's revolutionary shocks, which are not infrequent, generally originate in Argentine territory on the other side of the river. The Argentine Government certainly abstains from encouraging those who would stir up civil war, but it finds difficulty in enforcing its neutrality. This is typical of South America.

It is hardly necessary to say that the unsuccessful leader of an unsuccessful party hides himself in Buenos Ayres, ten hours distant by the fine boats on the estuary, and that this little group of politicians is constantly receiving additions owing to the commercial prosperity of the country. There are no fewer than 50,000 "Orientals" in the Argentine capital, and the daily departure, morning and evening, of the piroscapi bear witness to the movement of the population from one town to the other.

First impressions of South America are gained in a stay of a few hours. Disembarkation is a little difficult because of the heavy sea. The President kindly sends one of his aids de camp to welcome me. He places a most comfortable boat at my disposition which, after gayly dancing upon the waves, lands us without much trouble. The harbor, which has been constructed by a French firm, is nearly finished. Big ships from Europe can moor at the quays as they do at Rio. Why, then, does the Regina Elena remain outside? An administrative quarrel, similar to the one at Rio de Janeiro, exposes passengers to the annoyance of changing boats when there is every harbor accommodation. Thus, on these Latin shores, I find something to remind me of my bureaucratic country.

My friend the French Minister comes to welcome me, and with him a number of journalists of the camera and the pen, who greet me as a confrere. The head of the French colony, M. Sillard, an eminent engineer from the Ecole Centrale in Paris, very ably directs the harbor works. He has gained for France general respect. I visit the Post Office where I meet a cordial Montevidean, who betrays his knowledge of Paris in his very first words. What a long way to come to find our boulevards!

There can be no two opinions about Montevideo. It is a big, cheerful city with fine avenues. A few fine buildings denote the metropolis. Streets animated without being too noisy. Sumptuous villas in the suburbs. Sub-tropical vegetation in garden and park. Delightful walk among the palm trees by the sea.

The dwelling houses are, for the most part, of the Colonial type. The ground

South American is not precisely the novelty it offers in this respect. Yet it is sufficient to note the tranquillity that comes from the right kind of living and the domestic peace and regularity that are the result. Around the patio with its colonnade, bright with trees and plants, the family sit in rooms shaded from the sun, enjoying privacy and freedom from street noises.

These are impressions rapidly gathered, for my first visit must be to the President of the republic, and my time is limited. The President's palace is of very simple construction, and only differs from the surrounding buildings by reason of its military guard. Many of the soldiers are evidently of mixed blood. It is curious that they mount sentry outside the pavement. In the street itself, opposite the palace. The traffic has grown to such an extent that this regulation will have to be changed.

The President was not in his private office. I was received in a very friendly manner by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, who gives me the impression of an amiable Parisian. I meet the President a few yards from the palace, in conversation with several persons. He is easily recognizable by his tall hat. I refrained from intruding myself upon his notice. It is intimated that he will receive me on my return to the capital of Uruguay.

Senior Willman is a compatriot, son of a Frenchman born in Alsace. Before his election he was Professor of Physics. He has not allowed his official duties to interfere with his educational work, and twice a week he lectures in the college, where he becomes once again the happy master of youth who cannot contradict him.

This charming democratic simplicity is in curious contrast with our own persistent efforts to save from the old autocratic régime everything that can be preserved from the revolutionary wreck. "Tel culde engelsende autruit." * * * I note with pleasure that in this country, where political feeling runs high after the Latin manner, Senior Willman enjoys great personal prestige.

We must get back to the ship, which is announcing its departure. With what pleasure shall I revisit Montevideo. There is perhaps a more French atmosphere about the capital of Uruguay than any other South American city, but it has just enough exotic charm to make us feel pleasure that the inhabitants appreciate the French.

We get a view from the deck of the Regina Elena as we pass off the Cerro, something like Mont Valérien, the fortress which dominates Paris. The Cerro stands out boldly from the flat, alluvial country round about. It is also fortified, and Uruguay is so proud of this phenomenon that the Cerro figures in the national arms in the form of a green sugarloaf; no "Oriental" omits to tell you that there is nothing like it in the Argentine.

Under the stinging breeze of the persistent pampero our screws begin to turn again, with slow rhythm, the heavy clayey waters. To-morrow

"Two big rivers, the Uruguay and the Parana, pour their waters into this enormous inland lake, often ruffled by an unpleasant sea, as at this moment, in fact. They join forces at the little town of Nueva Palmira, and project into the Atlantic a volume of water drawn from a vast watershed covering one-quarter of the whole of South America. The tide is felt more than 150 kilometers above the confluence.

Montevideo, situate 200 kilometers from Buenos Ayres, seems to guard the entrance of this inner sea, while the Argentine capital, situate on the other bank, is almost at the extremity of the bay. Clay carried down by a somewhat weak current gets deposited at the mouth of the estuary and forms a bar which requires constant dredging to keep the channel open to vessels of large tonnage. This is the problem which faces the port authorities of Buenos Ayres.

At last the town comes in sight. From out of the gray clouds driven by the pampero there emerge the massive shapes of tall buildings, those high cubes of buildings dear to North America. Neither tall church steeple nor other distinguished architecture, low and prosaic banks only distinguishable from the water, a few clumps of palm trees here and there, unbroken plains, an utter absence of background to the picture. We are preceded by two pilot boats, their flags flying in honor of the President of the republic, who is lunching on board a training ship in the harbor itself.

Very slowly the Regina Elena brings up at the quay side. The gangway is put out, and, behold! a deputation of the Argentine Senate, accompanied by an officer from the President's military household, come to welcome me. A deputation from the French colony also arrives, having at its head M. Py, the distinguished Director of the French Bank of Rio de la Plata. Cordial handshakes. A thousand questions are asked and answered. Friendly greetings almost amounting in some cases to speeches are exchanged, and, naturally, there are allusions to the fatherland. Journalists abound. As may be supposed, The Prensa, The Nacion, The Diario have all a word to say. I offer my thanks to the members of the Senate.

Bidding farewell to the excellent Captain, with all good wishes, I get into a motor car, which carries me in ten minutes to the door of my hotel. I am in the Argentine Republic. It is evidently the moment to take my notes.

First of all, Buenos Ayres. It is a large European town, giving everywhere an impression of hasty growth, but foreshadowing, too, by its prodigious progress, the capital of a continent. The Avenida de Mayo, as wide as the finest of our boulevards, recalls Oxford Street in the arrangement of its shop fronts and the ornamental features of its buildings. It starts from a large public square, rather clumsy in its appearance, flanked on the sea side by a tall Italian edifice, known as the Palais Rose, in which the President and his Ministers sit, and is balanced at the other end of the ave-

nue by another square, of yesterday's construction, which ends at the Houses of Parliament, a colossal building nearly approaching completion, with a cupola resembling that of the Capitol at Washington. Every style of architecture is to be seen in this avenue, from the showy sort which is the more frequent, to the comparatively rare sober building. The most sumptuous quarters belong to the wealthy Prensa, of which we shall speak later.

Italian architecture prevails at Buenos Ayres. Everywhere the eye rests on arcades and loggias amid terrible complications of interlaced lines, exception, however, being made in favor of the dainty villas and imposing mansions which house the aristocracy. The business parts of all cities present the same features. The commercial quarter of Buenos Ayres is the most crowded imaginable. Highways that seemed spacious twenty or thirty years ago for a population of 200,000 or 300,000 souls have become lamentably inadequate to a capital city with a million people. The footway, so narrow that two can scarcely walk abreast, is closely-shaved by a tramway which constitutes a danger to the life of every passer-by. But the traffic is closely regulated by a careful police. So congested with foot passengers do certain streets become of an afternoon that they have to be closed to vehicles.

In spite of the wisest of precautions, the problem of shopping in the district is not easily solved. Politeness demands that the honors of the road be paid to age as to sex, and if by chance in the confusion you come upon a friend the outer edge of the pavement alone must be used, in order to check as little as possible the flood of human beings driven inward by the almost continuous passing of the tramway.

It is only just to add that this means of locomotion, which is universally adopted here, is remarkably well organized. Still, there are occasions when one must go on foot, and the municipal government, which has laid out elsewhere broad highways in which cabs, carriages, and motors take their revenge for the scanty accommodation afforded them by the overcrowded centre, is faced with the urgent necessity of laying out hundreds of millions in a ruinous scheme for street improvement in the very near future. M. Bouvard has come over from Paris for this purpose. I have no doubt but that he has given the most judicious advice, and that he has presented plans of fine avenues. But this does not prevent the fact that the outlay will involve a heavy pecuniary sacrifice by reason of the extravagant price of certain parts of the land, in some cases more costly than even in Paris.

One of the peculiarities of Buenos Ayres is that you cannot see any end of it. On the side of the pampas there



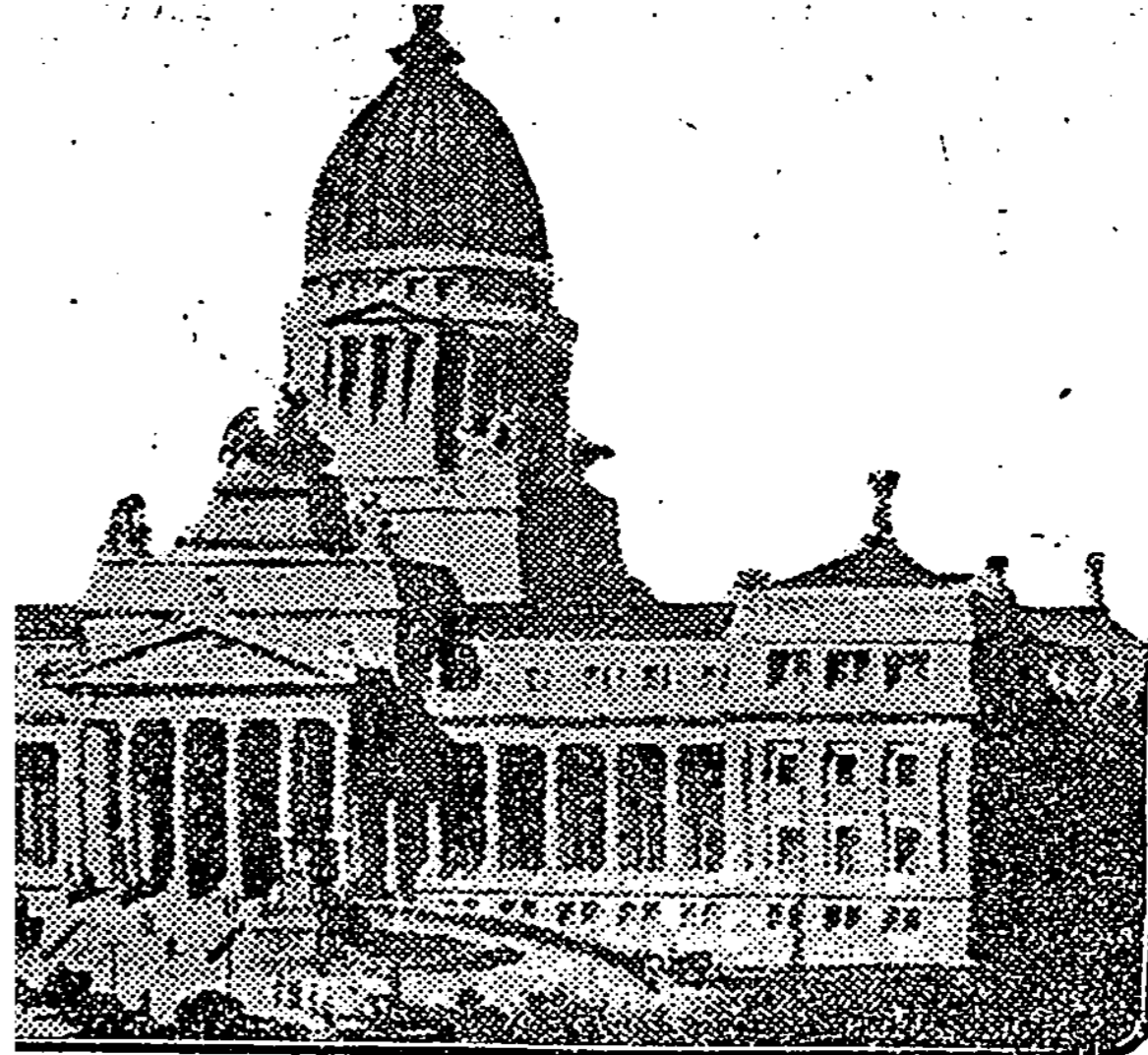
Georges Clemenceau, ex-Premier of France.

is no obstacle to the multiplication of small colonial houses similar to those which attracted my notice at Montevideo, forced outward from the city area by the increasing value of building plots—the object of perpetual speculation—and thus on the margin of the town is provided comfortable accommodation of brick, plaster, or concrete dwellings, which in this land require no chimneys. In proportion as one draws nearer the pampas the quality of the buildings is reduced. In the last degree are simplifications in the shape of sun-dried clay, with roof of corrugated iron, or the primitive rancho, in which petroleum cans placed at convenient intervals are used as the supports of a cabin that is completed by thatch and boughs of trees combined at haphazard. Should these in reality be counted as within the urban district? We have been running so long in the motor car that a doubt is permissible. The road is of mud, more or less smooth, which renders the journey just possible without in any way adding to its pleasantness.

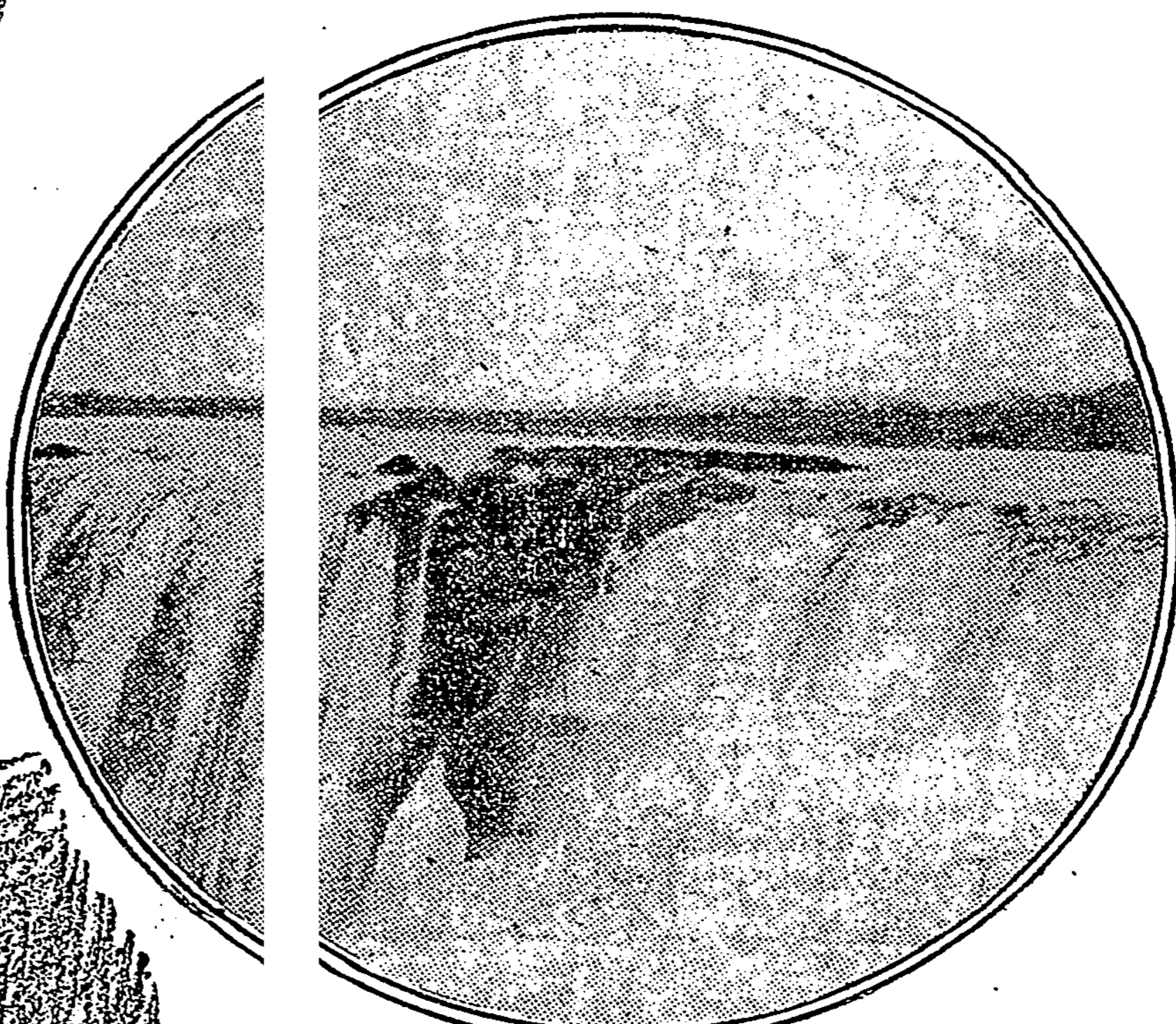
The drawback in this country is the absence of wood, of stone, and of coal. No doubt in the more distant provinces there are fine forests, which are being ruthlessly devastated either for quebracho (the tree that is richest in tannin) or for fuel for the furnaces of factories, but the cost of transport is so great the most prosperous part of the republic gets its timber from Norway. Uruguay, on the other hand, supplies a stone that is excellent both for building and for macadam or paving. A heavy expense. As for coal, it is the return cargo carried by the English vessels that carry both frozen meat and live cattle.

Without comparing in density of shipping with the ports of London or New York or Liverpool, a noble line of sea monsters may be seen stretching over ten kilometers in length, which are being rapidly loaded or unloaded in the docks by powerful cranes. The spectacle, a hundred times described, presents here no special feature.

It would require a pamphlet to give the plan and fittings of the Port of Buenos Ayres. Those interested in the subject can obtain without difficulty all the information they need. Others will be grateful to me for sparing them a list of figures borrowed from the many technical reports provided. Suffice it to mention here the fact that there are two ports: the "Riachuelo" and the "port of the capital." The former is a natural harbor formed by a stream bearing the same name. It is the auxiliary of the other, which has every modern appliance that art can suggest. An average of over 30,000 vessels, sail or steam, annually enter or leave the port, of which at least 4,000 are overseas craft.



The Congress Hall, With a Cupola "Closely Resembling That of the Capitol at Washington."



The Falls of Iguazu, "Greater and Loftier Than Those of Niagara."

The high corn elevators have been a hundred times described. Those of Buenos Ayres are no whit inferior to the best of the gigantic machines of North America. Each can load 20,000 tons of grain in a day. To one there is attached a mill said to be the largest in the world. Covered by way of precaution with the long white shirt that converts us at once into real "flour-men," we wandered pleasantly enough among the millstones and sifters which transform the small gray wheat of the pampas into fine white flour. The yield is thirteen hectoliters to the hectare, without manure and with a minimum of labor. Our own growers in the Beauce, accustomed to heavy loads of golden wheat, would hardly appreciate this species, which requires, moreover, a very careful washing. It is said to be richer in gluten than any other known kind. Sufferers from diabetes know, therefore, in which market to make their purchases.

The slaughter houses of the Negra around which I was taken by M. Carlos Luro (son of a Frenchman) is a model establishment in which no less than 1,200 oxen are killed daily, without counting sheep and pigs. A faithful copy of the famous slaughter houses of North America. The beast having reached the end of a passage in which it is impossible for him to turn is felled by a blow from a mallet and slips down a slope, at whose foot the carotid artery is cut, after which operation the body is hooked up by a small wagon moving along an aerial rail, and is then carried through a series of stages which end in its being handed over in two pieces to the freezing chambers to await speedy shipment to England, the great market for Argentine meat. The whole is performed with a rapidity so disconcerting that the innocent victim of our cannibal habits finds himself in the sack ready for freezing, with all his inside neatly packed into tins, before he has had time to think. "We use everything but his cries," said a savage butcher of Chicago. Veterinaries are in attendance to inspect each beast, which in the event of its being condemned is immediately burned.

It was inevitable that the first colonists coming from across the sea should have planted their city close to the port. To-day the capital complains that the approach to the sea is blocked up by shipping, elevators, and other industrial appliances, whereas its prosperous conditions would rather call for beautification and refinement. The same might be said of every busy port in the world. Buenos Ayres already needs a second, but it looks as though the present port could hardly be materially changed.

It is naturally in this quarter of the town that you find the wretched shanties, which are the first refuge of the Italian immigrants while waiting for the opportunity to start off again. Here is to be seen all the sordid misery of Eu-

Mar del Plata, "a Charming Conglomeration of Bellowed Villages on an Ocean Beach."

ropean towns with the accompaniment of the usual degrading features. I hasten to add that charity—official or private—is not lacking. The ladies of Buenos Ayres have organized different aid societies which visit needy families, and in this way, generosity being the most conspicuous trait in the Argentine character, the evil is at least reduced. By the way, no outward signs of that social evil which disgraces our own streets.

Why do these swarms of Italians stop at crowded Buenos Ayres instead of making straight for the pampas, where laborers are so greatly needed that harvests have been left to rot in the fields for want of hands, and this in spite of wages rising as high as 20 francs per day? There are several reasons for this. In the first place, such wages are for at most a few months or even weeks. And then, if the truth must be told, I have heard complaints from these Italians who find themselves but insufficiently protected in these distant farms against the rapacity of officials who abuse their powers. I will not insist further on this. The same complaint—but more in detail—was made to me in Brazil. Both Argentine and Brazilian authorities to whom I reported these statements have always protested that they took rigorous measures to punish their agents against whom any such conduct could be proved. The good faith of the governing bodies cannot be doubted since they have every inducement to develop as rapidly as possible the population of the pampas. The emigrant element is obviously not of the purest. I should not be surprised to learn, however, that there is need of greater control in the direction indicated.

So far, I have said nothing of the beauties of the city. It is a pity that the sea cannot be counted among the attractions of Buenos Ayres. A level shore does not lend itself to decorative effect. A mediocre vegetation. Water of a dirty ochre, neither red nor yellow. Nothing to be found to charm the eye. So I saw the sea only twice during my stay at Buenos Ayres—once on the arrival and again when I left. During the Summer heat that section of the population is not compelled to stay flees to Mar del Plata, the Trouville of Buenos Ayres, a charming conglomeration of bellowed villas on an ocean beach.

Perfectly healthy city. No expense has been spared to satisfy the demands of a good system of municipal hygiene. Avenues planted with trees, gardens and parks laid out to insure adequate reserves of fresh air that are available to all, and lawns provided for the recreation of youthful sports. The zoological and botanical gardens models of their kind. A fine racecourse surrounded by the green belt of foliage of the Argentine Bois de Boulogne, Palermo.

A Frenchman, the genial M. Thays, well known among his European colleagues, has entire control of the plantations and parks of Buenos Ayres. M. Thays, who excels in French landscape gardening, takes delight in devoting his whole mind and life to his trees, his plants and flowers, and is ready at any moment to defend his charge against any attacks, an attitude that is wholly superfluous, since the public of Buenos Ayres never lets slip an opportunity of testifying their gratitude to him.

Wherever he discovers a propitious site the master gardener plants a tree which will some day be a joy to look upon. He has created and planted fine parks. He deserves all thanks. And as he has at his disposal fine greenhouses, any prominent citizen or any association, aristocratic or popular, in need of floral decorations for some fête, can by a telephone call summon the municipal carts laden with plants and blossoms. In his search after rare species of plants for the enrichment of his town, M. Thays has visited equatorial regions—the Argentine, Bolivia, Brazil—and as his ambition vaults beyond the boundaries of Buenos Ayres, he has conceived a project, already in process of execution, of founding a great national park, after the fashion of that of North America, in which all the marvels of tropical vegetation may be collected. The falls of Iguazu—greater and loftier than those of Niagara—would be inclosed in this vast estate on the very frontiers of Brazil.

Apart from his plans of conquest, which make of him a rival of Alexander, M. Thays is a modest, affable man, who takes a good deal of trouble to look as if he had done nothing out of the common. Were I but competent I would describe the organization of his botanical garden, which is superior to any to be found in the old continent. More amusing is it perhaps to follow him through the various sections in which the characteristic flora of every part of the world is well represented. The Argentine, as may be supposed,

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"THE ORIENTAL BAND," AS CLEMENCEAU SEES IT

Continued from preceding page.

has here the larger share. Here are displayed specimens of the principal species of fauna to be found in the district lying between the frozen regions of Terra del Fuego and the equator, the antarctic beech, the carob palm, the quebracho, (rendered extraordinarily durable by the quantity of tannin it contains, and in great request for the sleepers of railway lines,) walnut, and the cedar of Tucuman or of Mendoza, which, by the way, is not a cedar. It is from its wood that cigar boxes are made. It is used in the woodwork of rich houses, for it is easy to handle and highly decorative by reason of its warm coloring. Its fault is that it warps continually. Wherever you find it, the doors and windows refuse to open or shut properly.

But you should see M. Thays doing the honors of the "Ombu" (pr. Ombou) and the "Palo Boracho."

The ombu is the marvel of the pampas, the sole tree which the grasshopper refuses to touch, and which for this reason alone has been allowed to grow freely, though not even man has found a way to utilize what the voracious insects of Providence decline. For the ombu prides itself on being good for nothing. It does not even lend itself to making good firewood. It is only to look at, but that is sufficient. Imagine an object resembling the backs of antediluvian monsters, mastodons, or ele-

phants, lying in the shade of a great bank of sheltering foliage. Heavy folds in the gray carapace denote a growing limb, a rounded shoulder, a gigantic head half concealed. These are the tremendous roots of the ombu, whose delight it is to issue forth from the soil in the form of astonishing animated objects. When by foot and stick you have ascertained that these living shapes are in reality mummified within a thick bark you turn your attention to the trunk itself and find it hollow, with a crumbling surface. Another surprise, for the finger sinks into the tree, meeting only the sort of resistance that would be offered by a thin sheet of paper. And now fine powdery scales of substance which should be wood, but, in fact, is indescribable, fall into your hand and crumble away into an impalpable dust, which is carried away by the breeze before you have had time to examine it. Now you have the secret of the ombu. Its wood evaporates in the open air; at the same time there spring from its strangely beastlike roots young and living shoots from the parent tree. Since it is impossible to burn the non-existent, you cannot, obviously, have recourse to the ombu to cook your lunch. Here is an example of paradox in the vegetable world, which has no mission in life but a glorious uselessness. If it were but beautiful I should recommend the ombu to poets who profess to prefer the beautiful to the useful. But as its appearance does not impress the beholder, the wisest course is to impute its existence to momentary abstraction on the part of the Creator.

The "palo boracho," on the other hand, is extremely useful, though not without a touch of capriciousness. This

tree is popularly known as "the drunkard," on the ground that it seems to stagger; but such a name is a libel. This peaceful denizen of the forest has nothing to do with the alcoholic world. Nor can it be said to attract human society, for its strange trunk, strangled in a collar of roots and bulging in its middle parts, bristles with innumerable points, short and sharp, which prevent all undue familiarity. These thorns fall with age, at least, from the lower part of the tree, but as they exist elsewhere, even on the smallest twig, no animal, from man to monkey, can venture upon its branches.

The trunk, if tapped with a cane, returns a hollow sound. The tree is, in fact, empty, needing only to be cut into lengths to give man all he needs for a trough. The Indian squaw uses such a receptacle in which to wash her linen, and the wood exposed to the double action of air and water becomes as hard as cement. The unripe fruit, the size of a good apple, furnishes a white cream which if not quite the quality demanded for 5 o'clock tea at Rumpelmayer's is regarded as a delicacy by the natives. Later, when the fruit comes to maturity, it bursts under the sun's rays into a large tuft of silky cotton, dotting the branches with white balls and furnishing admirable material for the birds to build their nests. It is for this reason that the species is known as the "false cotton tree." The exceedingly fine thread produced by this tree is too short to be spun, but the Indians, and even the colonists from Europe, turn it to account in many different ways. Soft pillows and cushions are made with it, and I can speak personally for their comfort.

M. Thays was not the man to let us leave without seeing his plantations of yerba-maté. Every one knows that

maté, the Paraguay holly, is a native of Paraguay, (whence it spread to Chile, Brazil, and the Argentine.) Its leaves, dried and slightly roasted, furnish an infusion that is as much liked by the natives as by the South American colonists. Like kola, tea, or coffee, maté contains a large proportion of caffeine, which renders it a good nerve tonic, and, at the same time, a digestive.

I have tasted Paraguay tea, or "Jesuits' tea," on several occasions without being able to say honestly that I like it; the palate, however, ends by becoming accustomed to anything. I have a friend who drinks valerian with pleasure. Every one in South America delights in the aroma of the strengthening but, on first acquaintance certainly unpleasant, maté. Existence in the pampas is rather strenuous. The days are past when a cow was lassoed to provide a beefsteak for your lunch. The favorite stimulant of the "rancho" is the "yerba-maté," which sets the horseman afresh in the saddle. Everywhere in town and country the first rite in the morning is maté drinking. Men and women carry with them the little gourd into which they dip the tube of the bombilla, a small circle pierced with holes which travels from mouth to mouth for the greater pleasure of the epicure.

Formerly the first infusion, rather bitter, of the maté was set aside for the servants. People are less particular nowadays. If maté still remains the most popular beverage, aristocratic and middle-class circles show a preference for China tea or Santos coffee. However, with the increase in the population the consumption of maté has grown enormously. It has been calculated that an Argentine spends twice as much during the year for maté as the Frenchman for his coffee. Within the last few years the Argentine Re-

public has imported from Brazil and Paraguay 40,000,000 kilograms, valued at 22,000,000f. These figures are of course in excess of the native crops.

The Argentine Government was very anxious to encourage the cultivation of maté. The difficulty lay in the process of germination. In certain provinces of Argentina maté sprouts spontaneously, but the sown seed remains unproductive. M. Thays, after prolonged experiment, discovered that the seed sprouted normally after being placed in hot water. The odd fact was that the seeds from plants thus obtained germinated successfully without having resort to the hot water process. This may be explained by the fact that in nature the seed sown by birds is softened by first passing through their stomachs. The Jesuits had discovered the secret of soaking the seed in warm water, but they carried it to Europe with them at the time of their expulsion from the country. M. Thays rediscovered it. More than once an attempt has been made to introduce the habit of maté drinking into Europe. I do not think it will easily come about. It would, however, be a great boom if yerba-maté could, as in South America, be substituted for the alcohol which threatens to destroy us.

I cannot leave the Botanical Gardens without speaking of the charming feature of its light trelliswork buildings, which are, in fact, to be seen in all large gardens. In these fortunate countries where Winter is a mere theoretical division of the year, neither shrubs nor flowers need the protection of glass. A Summer house of trelliswork, with pretty flower borders, is like a Winter garden without panes of glass, in which the sun's rays fall athwart the trellis. It is neither the open air nor the hothouse; it may be called a vast decorative green cage.